

EXPERIMENT: TRASHING THE WATERWAYS 2

This experiment can be used to support learning for Activity Cards STORMWATER, RUN OFF, NUTRIENTS, and LAND USE.

PURPOSE

To show what happens when pollutants are carried by stormwater into a waterway.

EQUIPMENT:

- 3 glass jars with lids
- Grass clippings and soil
- 2 small pieces of cotton cloth, approximately 10cm square
- String or rubber bands
- Pond water if possible, otherwise tap water
- Methylene blue

Note: Methylene blue is a chemical which turns blue in the presence of oxygen. It is sold in pet shops and aquarium supply shops as white spot cure for fish. It can also be purchased through science hobby shops.

PROCEDURE

1. Partly fill 3 glass jars with water
2. Tie up grass clippings and soil in a small piece of cotton cloth (like a plum pudding)
3. Place each bundle in a jar, leaving the third jar with just water as a control
4. Add methylene blue to all 3 jars until they are light blue in colour
5. Put the lids firmly on each of the jars and leave undisturbed for up to a week

RESULTS

Record the changes over a week.

CONCLUSIONS

Discuss:

- Which jar lost its colour first?
- What does it mean if the blue colour persists in the water?
- How do you think animal waste or grass clippings get into waterways?
- What problems do you think this might cause for waterways?

SOLVING THE CRIME

Are there any crime sites where pollutants could enter the waterway through stormwater?

Could any of the victims be harmed?